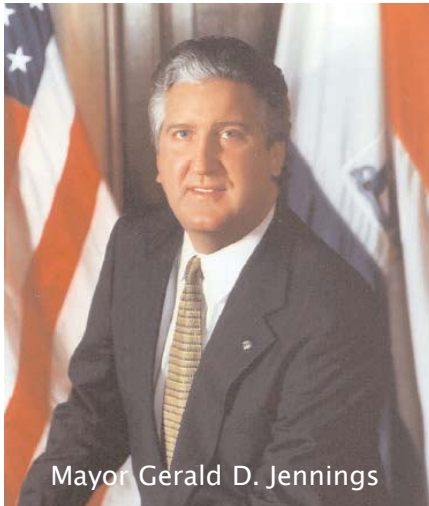


Block by Block

2008 Report



City of Albany, NY
Gerald D. Jennings
Mayor



Mayor Gerald D. Jennings

Dear Reader,

One year ago, I initiated the Block By Block program in the City of Albany, to provide a comprehensive neighborhood stabilization task force. This was designed as a 'high impact' operation that would achieve both short and long-term results. I was pleased to be joined by the New York State Attorney General Andrew Cuomo, the Albany County District Attorney David Soares, my Chief of Police, James Tuffey and the head of each and every City Department. I thank these individuals for their professionalism and dedication to this critical initiative, which has already yielded tremendous results.

The following report will outline the achievements of the first year of Operation Block by Block, and establish the blueprint for the future of this endeavor. I am pleased by the outcome to date, and remain committed to this operation.

The City of Albany, like many historic urban centers, is experiencing challenges with aging housing stock, abandoned and vacant buildings and neglectful property owners. In response, I have called for a targeted approach by building and code enforcement, crime suppression and neighborhood revitalization and reinvestment policies and resources. This challenge begs the need for significant resources primarily from state and national sources. When we're talking about the revitalization of cities - we need state and federal support to deal with the enormous challenge of revitalizing our urban centers. We cannot do it without their partnership.

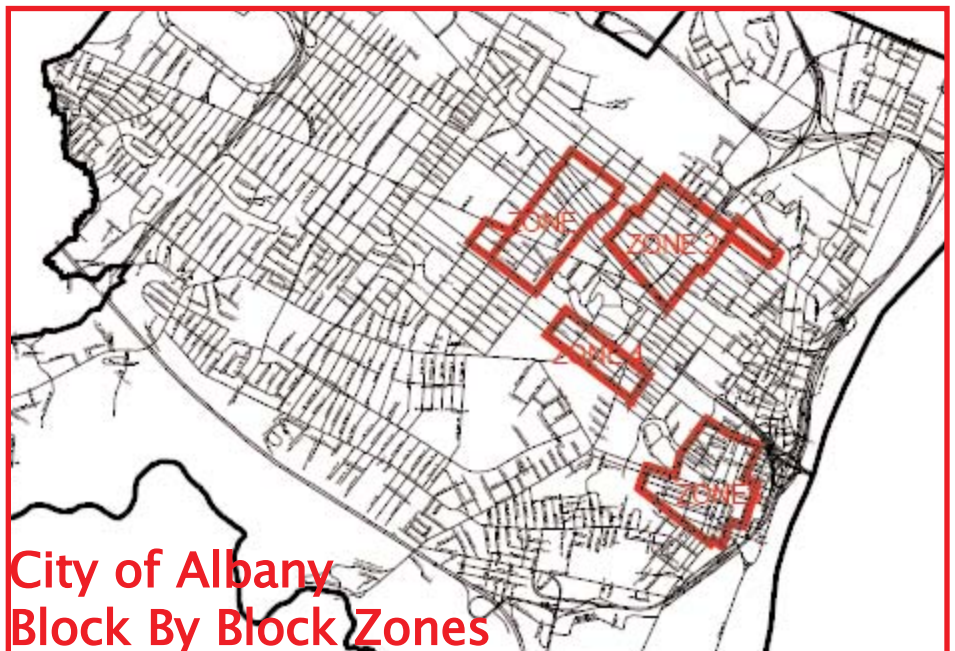
As the Capital City of New York State, I am pleased that we can serve as a model and a starting point for partnerships and programs to protect our neighborhoods. I am proud of every single neighborhood in this City and I will continue to fight for and lobby for more state and federal assistance to make sure that the efforts we make today achieve our common goal of making Albany a great place to live, work and raise a family.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gerald D. Jennings".

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**City of Albany
Block By Block Zones**

What is Block by Block?

Block by Block is an initiative designed to enhance the quality of life in Albany's neighborhoods. City staff is moving block by block, building by building and lot by lot through the City of Albany to strategically address code compliance, public safety, abandoned buildings and community development. At the same time, the initiative is taking a hard look at the City's business model and information flow to create an updated and more efficient system for communication between City departments.

The foundation for this initiative began through the recommendations of Mayor Jennings' Capitalize Albany committee in early 2007. This group called for enhanced coordination between City departments to combat blight and quality of life issues in the City's neighborhoods and targeted techniques for stabilizing and revitalizing these communities.

Directed by the Mayor, various City agencies began developing programming to implement these recommendations. It became clear that issues surrounding abandoned properties and the effect they have on their neighborhoods needed to be a top priority.

In November 2007, Mayor Jennings joined with his Chief of Police, James Tuffey, New York State Attorney General Andrew Cuomo and Albany County District Attorney David Soares to announce a series of programs targeting the abatement of abandonment issues.

Mayor Jennings placed Police Chief James Tuffey in charge of expanding Block by Block into a city-wide initiative encompassing virtually all City agencies, as well as IMPACT (a statewide law enforcement coordination effort) partners. Block by Block now incorporates all City agencies, local elected officials, County and State authorities and impacted neighborhood associations.

Block by Block uses the City code to look systematically at defined zones within the City of Albany. Starting with blocks that have the highest levels of crime and blight, representatives from all City departments review the code compliance of every building in these zones. Owners are cited for non-compliance and violations are rectified. The Block by Block team handles everything from litter and noise complaints to broken street lights and abandoned buildings.

Department heads meet with Mayor Jennings and the Chief of Police every Monday morning to report on the progress of Block by Block and to address inter-departmental issues. These meetings have been key to developing the program and revising it on an ongoing basis to ensure that all strategies make sense on the ground and are working to their full potential. The department head meetings have also helped to improve communication between departments and to coordinate more efficient information sharing and business practices.

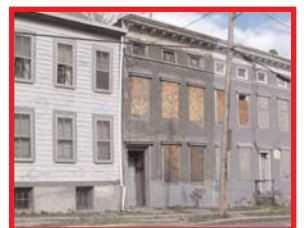
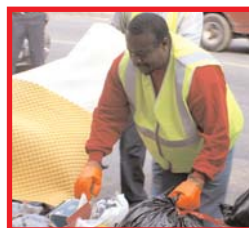
Block by Block's emphasis is on a cohesive, coordinated, concentrated effort to gather, analyze and disseminate information to tackle a wide range of issues from discovery, to investigation, to prosecution. The coordination is key, so that no issues go unnoticed, and efforts are not duplicated.

Each department designated employees to represent them for the initiative's targeted efforts. These employees are Block by Block's on the ground team charged with implementing a multi-phase approach to crime suppression, building and code enforcement, neighborhood cleanup, and community development

While addressing vacant and abandoned properties was the initial goal, several other areas of concern have been addressed by the initiative, including: residential occupancy permits (ROPs), hours of operation of commercial establishments, special use permits or conditions, sidewalk café permits, outdoor sales, maximum occupancy regulations, zoning violations, abandoned property board-ups, street and sidewalk repair, streetlight repair and illegal trash clean-ups.

Members of this team physically inspected and identified all areas in Zone One that have contributed to the aforementioned issues impacting quality of life. An ongoing systematic analysis will map out an aggressive approach to improving the initial target area. This data integration is becoming a new business model for the entire City. Details on this program and initial findings from Zone One are outlined in this report.

“Coordination is key so that no issues go unnoticed, and efforts are not duplicated.”



Process

Block by Block began with the identification of a 50-block area where an intense assessment of local quality of life was launched. For efficient analysis, these 50 blocks were divided into four geographic "zones." Zone One incorporates the blocks roughly within Madison Ave., First St., South Lake Ave. and Ontario St. Zone Two includes blocks in the Arbor Hill, West Hill and Sheridan Hollow Neighborhoods. Zone Three encompasses the South End and Mansion neighborhoods; and Zone Four will assess Park South.

These Zones were selected to be the first areas touched by the program. Block by Block's aim is to be expanded to reach every block in the City of Albany. This process is in addition to standard department practices that will be ongoing in all areas of the City. This intense assessment is meant to occur on a revolving basis, circling back around to Zone One once the process is completed citywide.

The Block by Block team is broken down into two groups that meet weekly. One is made up of the department heads from City divisions and related partner agencies like the Albany Housing Authority. This group meets every Monday morning with Mayor Jennings and Chief Tuffey. The department heads discuss each department's progress in the current zone and bring attention to any challenges or opportunities that present themselves through the assessment.

The second group consists of representatives, appointed by each department, to carry out the Block by Block initiatives on the ground. This group meets every Wednesday to share results and plan for the following week. At the beginning of a Zone assessment, this group meets more frequently, even daily, to walk the neighborhoods together to get a coordinated sense of each block's needs.

Each Zone begins with the Block by Block team conducting a preliminary analysis of the Zone's characteristics. This analysis includes everything from the number of vacant buildings registered in the Zone to the area's street paving schedule. Once this information is compiled, the team meets to develop a

synchronized rollout strategy.

With the strategy developed the team begins their high-visibility on the street assessment of the area. Representatives from the Department of General Services will be cleaning vacant lots, National Grid will be repairing streetlights, vacant buildings in the Zone will be analyzed by Fire and Emergency Services, the Division of Building and Codes and the Albany Community Development Agency, etc.

“City agencies are collaborating closely to ensure consistency in enforcement and coordination of efforts. The Block by Block team is working smoothly as a developed unit.”

Once the initial sweep is completed, the team members follow up with citations and court proceedings and analyze the data collected by each effort. The results are shared between departments and integrated into the City's new comprehensive database, which is discussed in detail on the following page. Continuous information sharing has generated strong communication lines between departments and is enhancing the delivery of services not only in the active Zone, but also citywide.

Once all necessary work and inspections have been completed within the Zone, the team produces reports of their findings and compiles them to assess the progress made. Each department's findings are reviewed at both the department head and representative meetings. This serves to eliminate inconsistencies and fill gaps, but also highlights positive achievements and determines the best ways to standardize procedures. At these meetings, City agencies are collaborating closely to ensure consistency in enforcement and the coordination of efforts.

From the outset, flexibility has been key to this program. Techniques and strategies have been fluid to allow the Block by Block team to work in the most effective and efficient manner on the ground. If issues arise, new strategies are developed to handle them. Once something is proven to be working well, the strategy is streamlined for use on every block. Because of this flexibility, the Block by Block team is working smoothly as a developed unit and the assessment of Zone One has produced extremely positive results, while providing constructive learning opportunities for process enhancement.



Data Collection & Integration

One of the most exciting aspects of the Block by Block initiative is the creation of a comprehensive data system for the City of Albany. While not as visible as the on-the-street efforts, this technological component is producing some of the initiative's biggest and most beneficial results. We are incorporating new technology and new business practices to improve information flow between departments to better serve Albany's residents.

Early in the process it became clear that updating the City's information systems would be a high priority. Data collection is an integral component to the Block by Block initiative. Having updated information that can be analyzed and mapped is the most efficient way to address past deficiencies that existed.

Block by Block provided an opportunity to integrate the data being collected from each department into a comprehensive system. This would allow for a major shift in the City's business practice from researching and processing information by request, to enabling each department to pull information gathered by another with the click of a mouse.

Because of this opportunity, one of the first goals created for the Block by Block initiative was to build a central database where all relative information could be downloaded and put into the requisite programs to be utilized in the most effective manner.

Currently, data is being received from Real Property and Building and Codes from the computer system at City Hall and is incorporated into a web application developed and maintained by the Albany Police Department.

Specifically, the current owner information maintained by the City's Real Property Assessment is transferred to the Police Department computer system on the hour and is incorporated into the web application once a day. Eventually the plan is to incorporate the data three times a day. The house photos resulting from the last property reassessment have also been

incorporated into the City's maps.

Additionally, the Residential Occupancy Permits (ROPs) developed and maintained by the City's Division of Building and Codes are transferred to the computer system on the hour and are incorporated into the web application once a day. This data is also going to be incorporated three times a day.

Unpaid taxes on a property are transferred to the system once a year and are also incorporated into the web application.

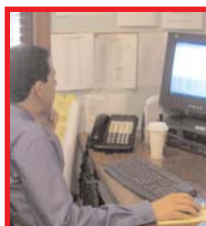
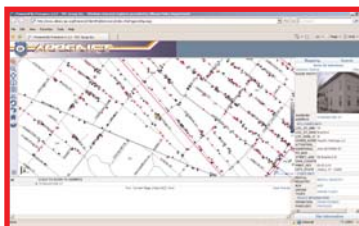
Finally, the Rental Registry, developed and maintained by the Division of Building and Codes, is transferred to the computer system on the hour and is incorporated into the web application once a day. Ultimately, this will be incorporated three times a day.

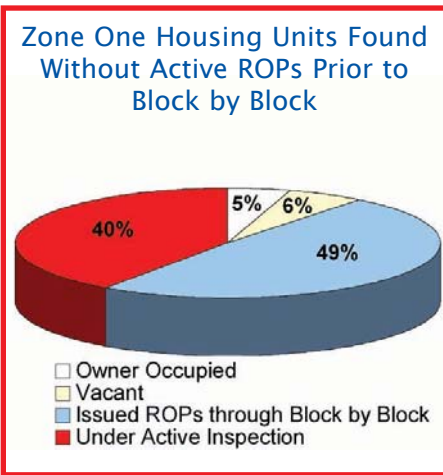
This data collection has allowed for a systematic analysis of past and current issues that exist in the particular zoned areas so that a comprehensive approach can be utilized to provide effective solutions.

The system is being housed and maintained in the Police Department. Once the development of this system is complete, all City departments will have access to it through a citywide intranet. With access to this dynamic system, each department's workflow will be smoother and more efficient, providing faster and more up-to-the-minute results. The system will be flexible and mobile allowing for its use in Police cruisers, PDAs and global positioning system (GPS) units. With this program, the City is moving toward seamless internal communication.

This data system will be immensely useful to the public as well. It will make data requests easier for staff handle, therefore issuing requested information in a quicker and more efficient manner. Soon, though, a phone call won't be necessary for some basic inquiries. Once the system is fully operational, portions of it will be made available to the public through the City's website. Block by Block is changing the City's business model, both on the ground and on the Web.

“We are incorporating new technology and new business practices to improve information flow between departments and better serve Albany's residents.”





Department of Fire & Emergency Services / Division of Building & Codes

The Division of Building & Codes is a two-part operation. The Buildings side of the division deals with new construction and/or alterations along with zoning compliance for the City of Albany. It consists of seven inspectors, a Senior Building Inspector, two Building Inspectors, a Senior Electrical Inspector, an Electrical Inspector, a Senior Plumbing Inspector, and a Plumbing Inspector. The Codes side of the division deals with existing buildings/structures of a residential or commercial nature. Over 250 members of the Department of Fire, Emergency & Building Services perform inspections for Code Enforcement.

The Division of Building & Codes is charged with enforcing the New York State Uniform Fire Prevention & Building Code, the Code of the City of Albany, NY and other related building codes.

As part of the Block by Block initiative, procedures for permit applications have been strengthened to track vacant buildings and the Vacant Building Registry more aggressively.

Added to the permit application process, if a building is vacant and if there are no current ROP's, a building permit will be denied until the building is registered vacant or ROP's are issued.

If a permit was submitted to correct a violation, the permit is issued for 36 days and then reinspected after that time elapses. The same applies to plumbing and electrical permits. If the building is not on the vacant building registry or has no current ROP's, the permit will not be granted.

Zone One Results:

- 974 dwelling units did not have current Residential Occupancy Permits (ROPs) in Zone 1.

- As of October 2008, 45 of the units have been determined through inspection to be owner occupied dwelling units, therefore ROPs are not required.

- 57 of the dwelling units have been determined to be vacant at this time therefore an ROP is not required until just prior to occupancy.

- 480 Residential Occupancy Permits have been completed and issued. The additional 392 are actively being inspected.

- Zone 1 has 91 vacant buildings that are subject to the Vacant Building Registry.

- 32 of these vacant properties are currently registered on the Vacant Building Registry.

- Notices to register their properties have been sent to all owners of vacant buildings citywide. Those owners who do not register in a timely manner are brought to vacant building court. To date, court has registered 20 properties in Zone 1 through Block by Block.

- 10 buildings are no longer subject to the vacant building registration process with nine being reoccupied and ROPs issued. One building has been demolished as a result of a fire.

- One Lieutenant and two firefighters have been assigned to actively search for any additional buildings not identified on the current Zone 1 list.

- All 840 citywide owners of single family homes where the owner does not reside, or has mail sent to a separate address, were sent "210" letters asking for updated information.

Department of General Services (DGS)

DGS is responsible for maintenance of all of the City's infrastructure and facilities. The Department's mission is to ensure that the City's streetscapes, parks infrastructure, public facilities and natural resources are maintained to be functional, safe, clean, attractive and convenient for residents and visitors alike. Functional work areas under the Block by Block initiative of DGS are more specifically outlined as follows:

DGS is responsible for all solid waste management programs including curbside waste & recycling collection for residential structures with 1 to 4 units. It runs the operation of the Rapp Road landfill and shredding plant, which collects a total of 250,000 tons annually.

The Department enforces City codes relating to trash, debris, lot cleanups, excessive curbside trash, graffiti, snow and ice removal, emergency residential tree inspections and/or removal, street opening permits and news rack registration.

More than 670 City streets are swept weekly by specialized street cleaning equipment, hand crews and two sidewalk litter vacuums. DGS is responsible for the reconstruction, repaving, and maintenance of over 250 miles of City streets and related sidewalks and curbs. The department is also responsible for the timely and efficient removal of snow and ice from City streets and public places following winter weather events. Approximately 100 City vehicles and private contractors managed by DGS are employed for these purposes.

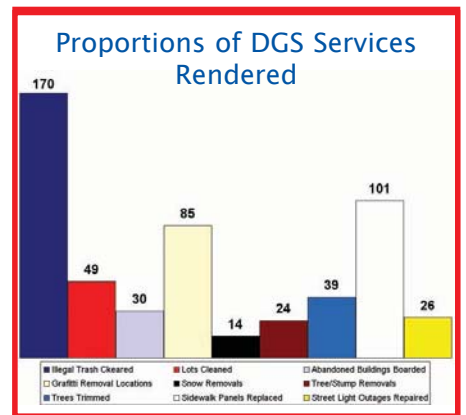
DGS maintains over 40,000 street trees within the City of Albany. Forestry plants an average of 200 trees each year and maintained over 1,000 trees annually. DGS operates a shared cost tree program when a resident can have a tree planted in front of their home, paying only half of the cost and the City paying the other portion.

In 1997, the department created an anti graffiti program to deal with the ongoing urban decay caused by graffiti. The City's graffiti buster van is fully equipped with graffiti removal materials. DGS responds and cleans over 2000 locations per year.

DGS has been designated City liaison to National Grid to facilitate street light issues, new construction, street light replacements and street openings.

Zone One Results:

- 170 locations have been cleared of illegal trash with billing totaling \$14,434.08 and fines amounting to \$30,625.00.
- 49 lots have been cleaned up with billing totaling \$22,246.97 and fines amounting to \$6,400.00.
- 30 buildings have been boarded up with billing totaling \$12,027.64.
- 85 locations have been identified and graffiti removed.
- Snow was removed in 14 locations with billing totaling \$1,634.45.
- 24 Tree/Stump Removals
- 39 Trees Trimmed
- 45 new trees planted
- 101 Side Walk Panels Replaced
- 26 Street Light Outages Repaired
- 4 street reconstruction projects and 1 city block sidewalk reconstruction project completed – an investment totalling \$571,795



Community Development Agency & Department of Development & Planning

The Department of Development and Planning (DDP) includes the Agency of Economic Development, the Housing and Community Development Agency (ACDA) and the Division of Planning, and the newly formed Division of Neighborhood Revitalization. DDP coordinates economic development, housing and community development and planning activities within the City. Each office is responsible for program administration and project development, many of which occur within the Block by Block zones.

The Economic Development Office provides staff support to the Albany Local Development Corporation (ALDC), a not-for-profit corporation that manages an extensive loan portfolio and certain real estate assets, initiating new projects, and engages in other forms of activities designed to stimulate private investment and create employment opportunities for residents of the City. It also provides administrative support to the Albany Empire Zone Administrative Board, the Capitalize Albany Executive Committee and the City of Albany Industrial Development Agency.

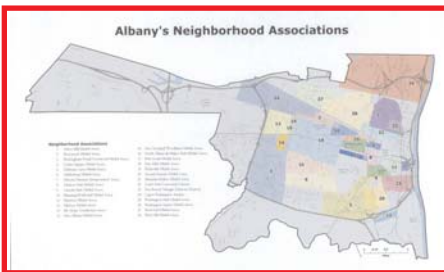
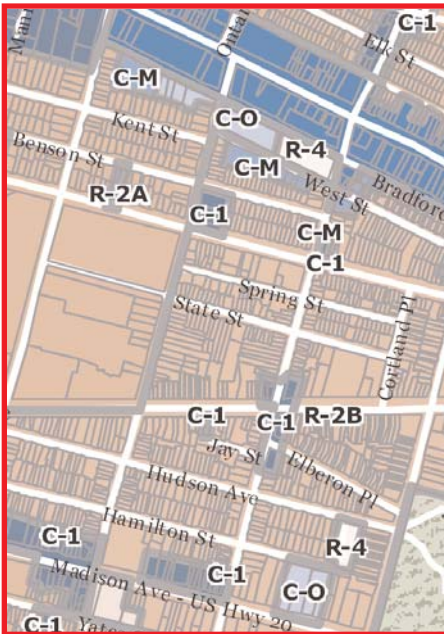
The Community Development Agency is responsible for administering and distributing community development funds received annually from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, NYS Affordable Housing grants, Federal and State Brownfield Programs, Emergency Shelter Grant, HOPWA, City of Albany programs and other resources. The office also plays an active role in consolidated planning for the utilization of CDBG funds. The agency coordinates all housing activities in the City so that independent agencies, such as the Albany Housing Authority and the Albany Local Development Corporation, work towards the same goals and objectives, and is also responsible for administering a federally funded and nationally recognized Lead Paint Abatement Program, which will provide grants to qualified homeowners for the removal and/or containment of lead paint.

During 2008, the Division of Neighborhood Revitalization was created. This Division will manage the City's neighborhood revitalization initiatives, abandoned building efforts, and home-ownership programs. Division staff is active in Vacant Building Court, guiding property owners through the process and providing assistance where appropriate. The Division administers an acquisition fund and land bank to strategically revitalize abandoned properties.

The Planning Office is responsible for the administration and procedural requirements of the development approval process. In this capacity, the office functions as staff to the Board of Zoning Appeals, Planning Board, Historic Resources Commission, the Common Council, and the City Archaeologist. In addition, the Division oversees the development of neighborhood plans and initiatives and is responsible for long-range planning. This includes the development and maintenance of the City's comprehensive plan. The Division of Planning is also responsible for the development and coordination of a City-wide sustainability agenda and climate action plan.

Zone One Results:

- 102 vacant buildings evaluated
- 24 full interior inspections done through Vacant Building Court
- 78 exterior evaluations
- 464 Elk St., a public safety hazard, demolished with \$13,300 from ACDA
- Creation of the Division of Neighborhood Revitalization generated \$950,00 to target abandonment
- Over \$42,000 in grants to West Hill Improvement Corporation for improvements to homeowners' properties



Law/Corporation Counsel

Since the Block by Block initiative began, significant improvements have been made in the handling and/or the prosecution of cases. Specifically, whenever a case comes in for "No ROP's", an immediate check is done to ensure that such buildings are registered on the "Rental Dwelling Registry." If a building is not registered, the owners / agents are provided with a registry form, and are required to immediately complete the form, or submit the form in a short amount of time.

A crosscheck is also done to see if the owner has any other properties in the City. Similarly, if there is a case that is brought to court for violations, an immediate check is done to see if the property has current ROP's and if the property owner has any other property within the City of Albany. In addition, if major work is going to be done, a check is done to ensure that the property owner applies for the proper permits, and that a City inspector checks the work before closing out the permit.

Once a case is in court, lengthy discussions occur with the property owners informing and describing their duties and responsibilities overall. This ensures that we have compliance before bringing another action against an owner.


As part of the Block by Block initiative, a Vacant Building Court was created to address vacant buildings throughout the City. That is, in order to be in compliance with the Code of the City of Albany, a vacant building must be registered on the Vacant Building Registry, and it also must be properly maintained. The Vacant Building Court allows the City to have one-on-one discussions with owners of vacant buildings to determine the status of the vacant building, as well as to ensure there is a plan for the rehabilitation, demolition, or transfer of such vacant building. Also, other departments from the City are available to educate these owners as to the services that may be available.

In addition, the Law Department has created a checklist that ensures that each case that comes before the Code Enforcement Court is thoroughly examined, and that each property owner knows what is necessary on all of their properties within the City of Albany.

Zone One Results:

- 134 cases brought to Vacant Building Court, 34 in Zone 1
- 66 buildings registered to Vacant Building Registry, 20 in Zone 1
- \$23,750 in fines and fees from Vacant Building Court, \$5,750 in Zone 1
- Outstanding cases are being processed. All owners of vacant building have been contacted to register their properties. Those failing to register within the allotted time will be brought to Vacant Building Court

- 210 cases citywide brought to Buildings Court, garnering \$18,650 in fines to date -The 35 cases in Zone 1 generated \$1,250.
- 138 cases in Zone 1 brought to court through the Albany Fire Department (ROPs, complaints, Rental Property Registry, failure to comply with notice and order and others), assessing \$17,500 in total fines - There were 747 cases citywide levying \$104,690.50 in fines.

 CITY OF ALBANY
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
DIVISION OF BUILDING & CODES
PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING
165 HENRY JOHNSON BLVD. - 1ST FLOOR
PHONE: (518) 434-5165
FAX: (518) 434-6015

VACANT BUILDING REGISTRATION FORM
(Please complete and return within thirty (30) days - Must be typed or legibly printed)
(See Reverse for Directions) Sheet _____ of _____

Building Address: _____
Owner of Record: _____
Owner's Address: _____
(please include zip)
Owner's Phone: () _____

Agent's Name: _____
Agent's Address: _____
(please include zip)
Agent's Phone: () _____

Contact Person: _____
Business Number: _____
Other Number: _____

Lienholder (1) Name: _____
Lienholder (1) Address: _____
(please include zip)
Lienholder (1) Phone: () _____

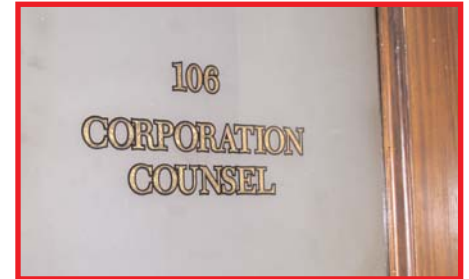
Lienholder (2) Name: _____
Lienholder (2) Address: _____
(please include zip)
Lienholder (2) Phone: () _____

Property Description: _____

Vacant Building Plan: _____

Signed: _____ Title: _____
Name: _____ Company: _____
Date: _____

OFFICIAL USE ONLY
Date Rec'd: _____
Amt. Encl. _____
Check No. _____
Reg. No. _____





Albany Police Department

The Block by Block initiative utilizes the police department's information technology to collect data, conduct analysis, map information and provide feedback to the Block by Block committee.

While there are many different agencies that have a integral part in the Block by Block initiative, crime suppression and quality of life initiatives carried out by the police department are vital components to achieving positive results, street by street and block by block.



In Zone 1 a number of quality of life initiatives were undertaken by officers, as well as identifying areas where crime prevention and suppression were a priority. A joint law enforcement approach was undertaken in Zone 1 to locate weapons, contraband and to secure vacant or abandoned properties. Every Wednesday members of the Albany Police Department, State Police and the Albany County District Attorney's Office conducted block by block searches in targeted areas of Zone 1.

Members were broken into four teams and were given specific territories to locate abandon or vacant buildings. Property owners were contacted to receive consent to search the buildings if they were not secure.

During the searches, members of the teams interacted with the community to elicit positive feedback and input. Over the course of the searches, 332 buildings were checked, resulting in 21 that were identified as unsecure.



Zone One Results:

- Robbery – 15 arrests
- Aggravated Assaults – 21 arrests
- Burglary – 18 arrests
- Larceny – 10 arrests
- Drugs – 131 arrests
- Criminal Mischief – 20 arrests
- Assault – 47 arrests
- GCO citations – 47
- Firearm Seizures – 33



Other Agencies & Departments: Albany Housing Authority, Water, Assessment

Albany Housing Authority - The US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires the Albany Housing Authority to inspect all apartments before Section 8 tenants move in to verify they meet Federal Housing Quality Standards. The inspection includes a review of the interior and exterior of the building and all common areas. The three AHA inspectors are trained NYS code enforcement inspectors. Two need an updated class to re-certify by the State. They are also trained as Housing Quality Standards (HQS) inspectors. This training is approved by HUD for inspecting Public Housing and Section 8 properties.

After the initial inspection, the Authority inspects the apartment annually. The tenant or owner can also request a complaint inspection. If the apartment fails an inspection and the repairs are an emergency, notification is given for the owner/tenant to make the necessary adjustments within 24 hours. If the repairs are routine the owner is notified that they have 30 days to make the necessary repairs. If the landlord fails to make the necessary repairs during the specified time period, the Section 8 payment is stopped and will not be reinstated until the repairs are completed and verified by the Authority staff.

All inspection information of the 2,200 housing units that fall under the supervision of the Authority is forwarded to the City's Codes Department.

City of Albany Department of Water & Water Supply - The Albany Water Department inspects, repairs and performs regular maintenance of all 3,300 fire hydrants in the City. In the winter months, they also flag the hydrants to make them visible during the heavy snowstorms. A dedicated hydrant inspector maintains and repairs the hydrants on a daily basis. If a hydrant is not working, it is tagged out of service until repairs are made.

With regard to Zone 1, more than 80 hydrants were inspected, and where needed, repairs were made.

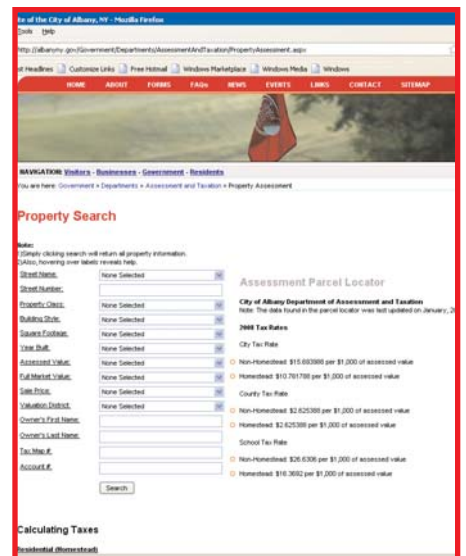
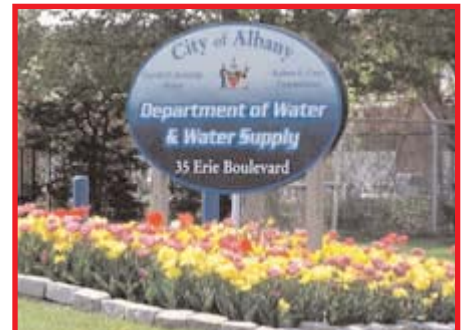
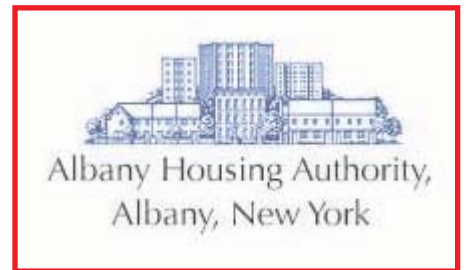
As part of the Block by Block initiative, the Water Department has started to maintain catch basins and manhole structures throughout the City. In Zone 1 more than 125 catch basins and manholes were inspected and repaired as necessary.

Removal of trip hazards, such as water valves protruding above ground, is part of the Water Department's responsibility. Sixty-five trip hazards were identified and repaired within the zone.

City of Albany Department of Assessment & Taxation - There are approximately 3,000 properties where the address on the building differs from the address on the assessment rolls and tax maps. These are known as "aka's".

Under Block by Block the Office of Assessment and Taxation has begun to physically visit each parcel where these addresses do not match, so that the necessary changes can be made to reflect accurate information.

This project will also help the emergency 911 systems and eliminate any confusion when there is a need to physically visit any property by any department. The estimated time to complete the project is May 1, 2009, which coincides with the next assessment roll.





New York State Attorney General Nowhere to Hide Program

"Nowhere to Hide" uses powers unique to the New York State Attorney General Andrew Cuomo's office against landlords who allow persistent illegal activity at their properties. The resources of the Attorney General's office will be used to target the owners of properties used by drug gangs and gun traffickers, and, at the same time, create safer neighborhoods for all New Yorkers. The program will be deployed in other Upstate communities as part of the Attorney General's ongoing Upstate Guns, Gangs and Drugs Initiative. The program will accomplish the following:

- The Identification of properties that pose the greatest threat to communities
- The committing of investigators and legal staff from the NYS Attorney General's Office to gather and develop the necessary evidence
- The filing of lawsuits against landlords seeking court orders to stop the illegal conduct from continuing at the properties.



The primary legal authority for the "Nowhere to Hide" program exists in NYS Real Property Law § 231, which permits the NYS Attorney General to commence a proceeding to enjoin a landlord and/or tenant from continuing unlawful trade, manufacture or business in a rental property, and Executive Law § 63(12), which authorizes the Attorney General to bring a special proceeding for permanent injunctive relief where a person or business demonstrates repeated or persistent illegality in the carrying on, conducting or transaction of business.



Albany County District Attorney Safe Homes – Safe Streets Initiative

When a criminal does business in an apartment building, that action deprives the existing tenants of their right to the peaceful enjoyment of their own homes. Drug dealers create loud foot traffic at all times of the day and night and can be physically intimidating. The result is that honest peace-loving tenants move out, leaving the landlord with reduced incomes and the tenants searching for new homes.

The Safe Homes - Safe Streets Initiative began in 2005 as a partnership between landlords, tenants, homeowners, and law enforcement to eliminate the criminal element that conducts its illegal activities within private dwellings through an aggressive use of the power of eviction. It consists of three elements: Landlord Training; the Trespass Affidavit Program; and Narcotics Eviction. The Safe Homes - Safe Streets Initiative has trained more than 550 Landlords; registered 526 Homes in the Trespass Affidavit Program; and evicted tenants from 42 problem locations.

The Safe Homes - Safe Streets Initiative involves a coalition of tenants, landlords, and law enforcement. Specific participants include: The Office of the District Attorney; The Albany Police Department; United Tenants; Albany Housing Authority; and Albany County Department of Social Services.

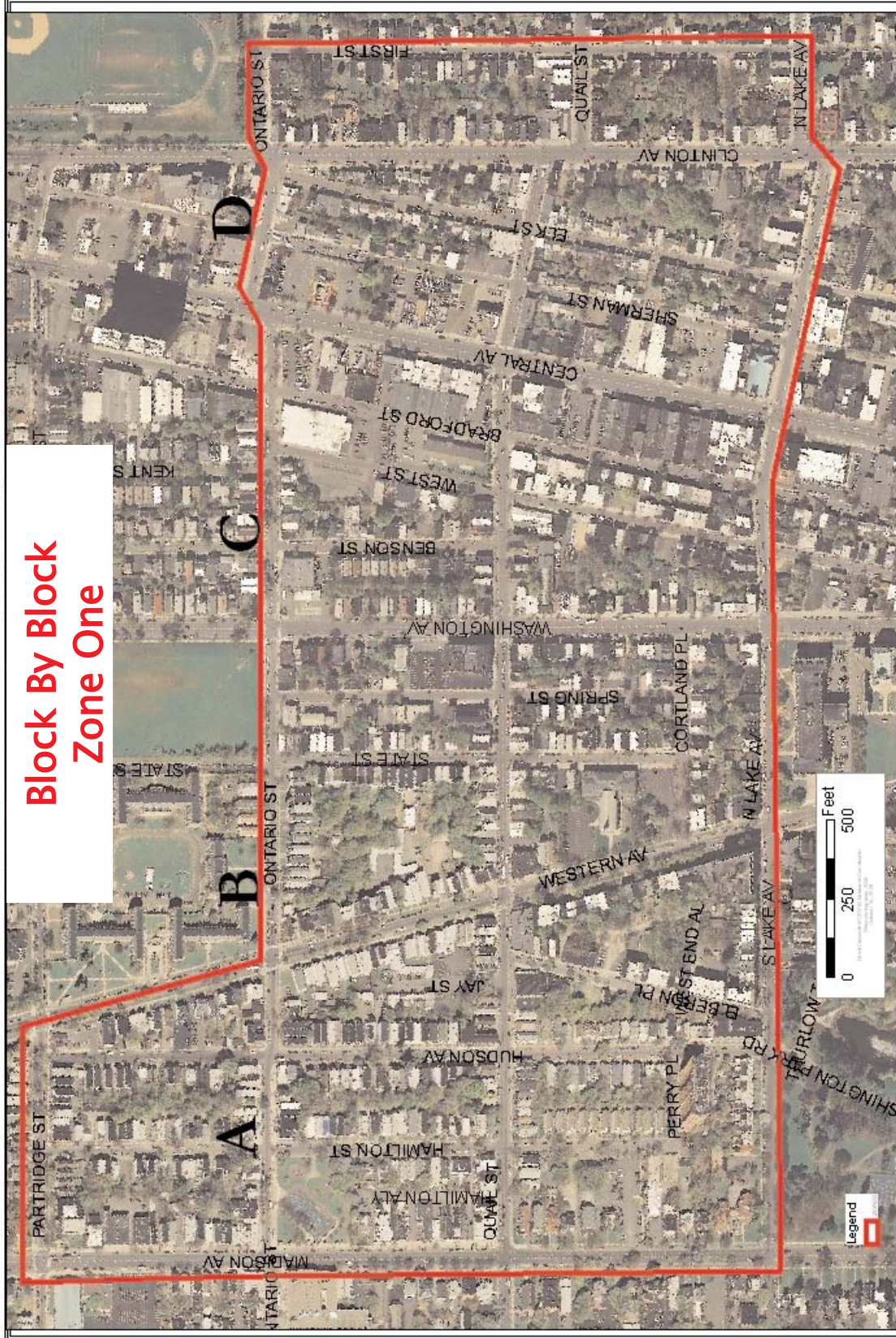
Since collaborating with the Albany Police Department through the Block-by-Block Initiative, there has been significant activity in Zone 1 to improve public safety and quality of life for residents. Twenty-eight properties have registered with the Trespass Affidavit Program; and Narcotics search warrants have been executed at five properties.



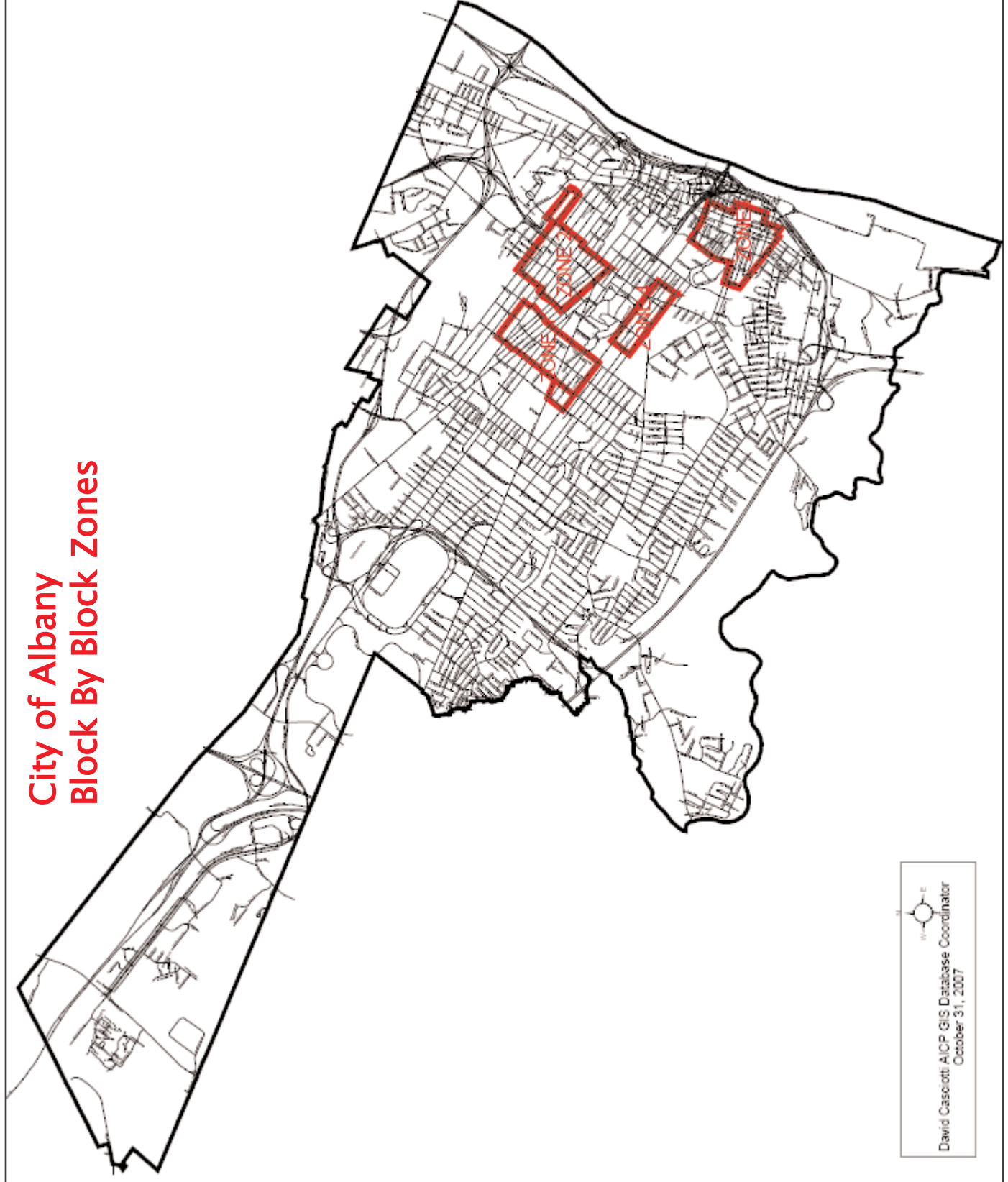
Appendix

i.....	Block by Block Zone One
ii.....	City of Albany Block by Block Zones
iii.....	Zone 1D Field Survey
iv.....	Zone 1 Active Vacant Buildings
v.....	Zone 1 Active Vacant Buildings Not Registered
vi.....	Zone 1 Active Vacant Buildings Registered
vii.....	Zone 1 Active Vacant Buildings Court Action
viii.....	Zone 1 Department of General Services
ix.....	Sample Screen Shots from the APPSNET web-based database
x.....	Certificate of Special Use
xi.....	Vacant Building Registration Form
xii.....	Rental Dwelling Registry Form
xiv.....	Application for Zoning & Building Permit

**Block By Block
Zone One**

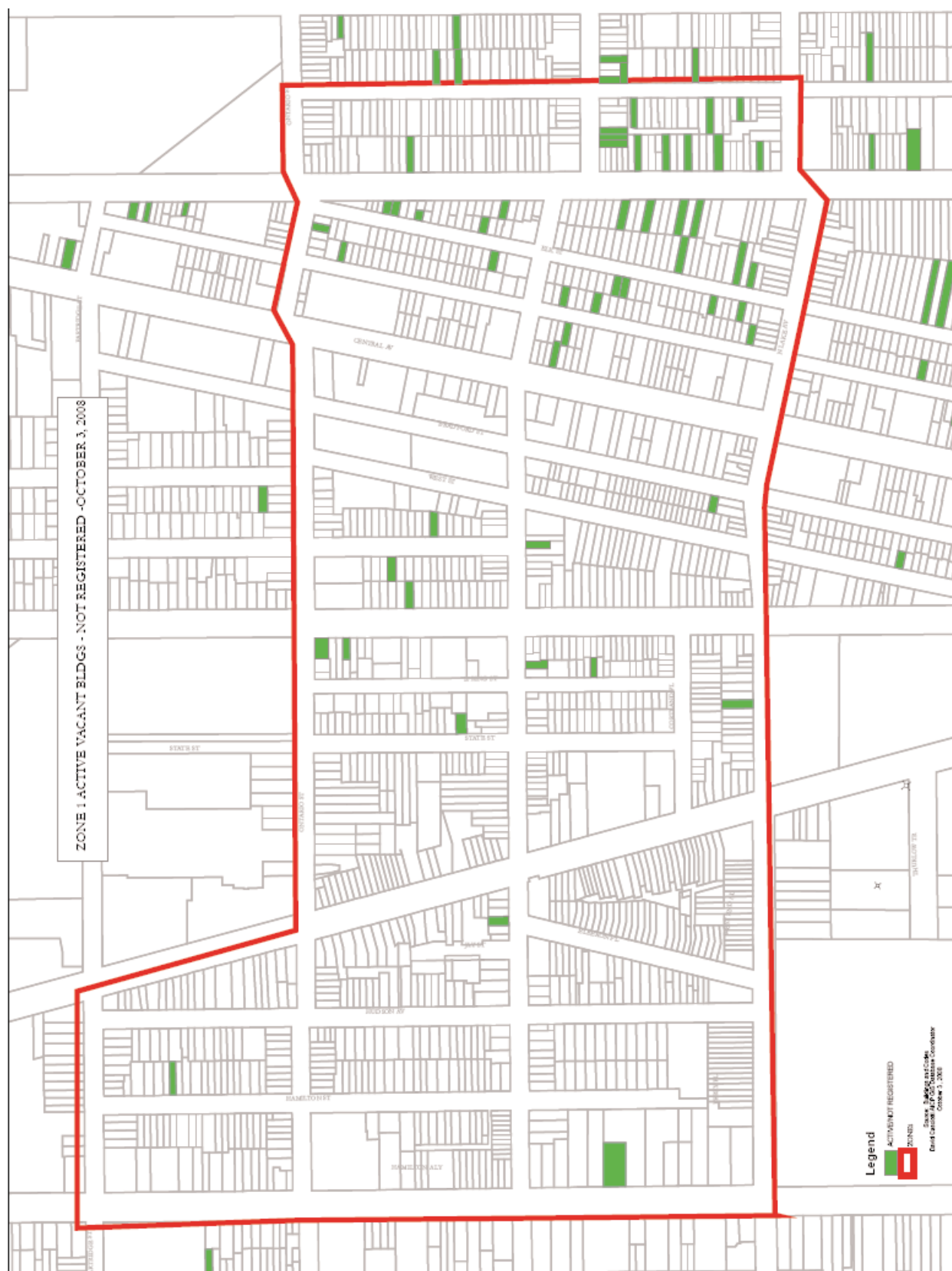


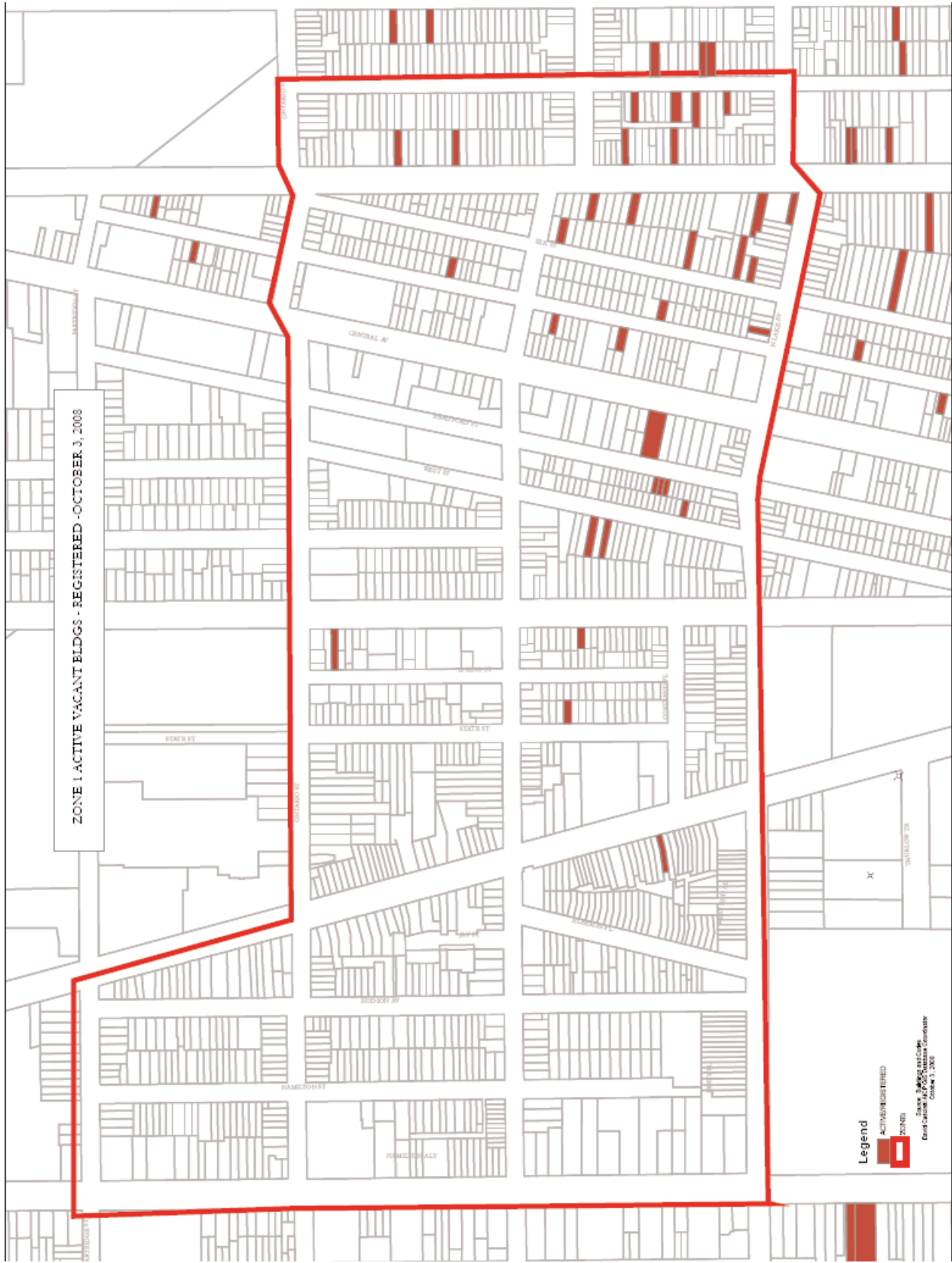
City of Albany Block By Block Zones



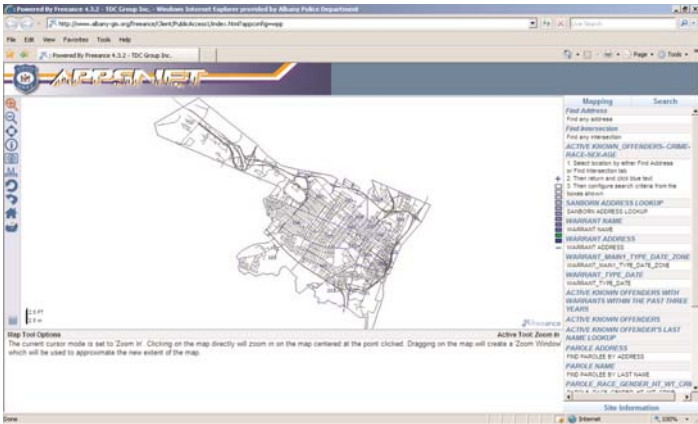
David Casciotti AICP GIS Database Coordinator
October 31, 2007



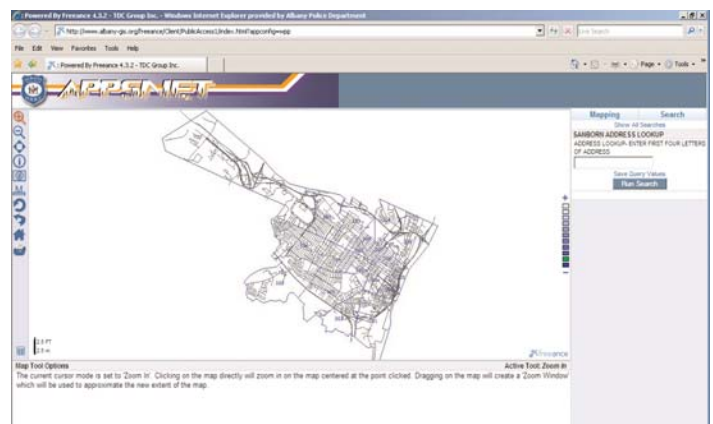




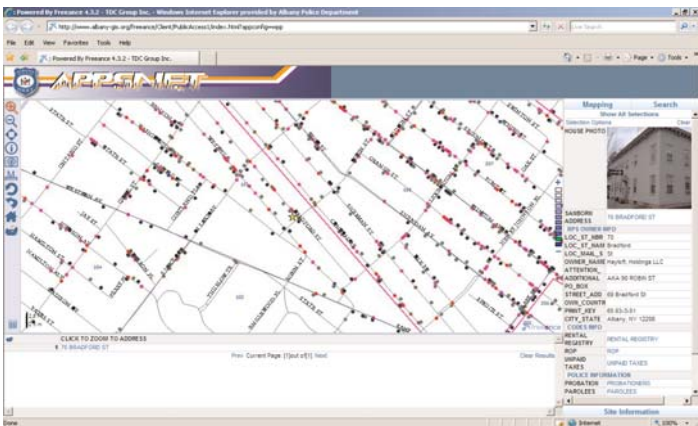
Sample Screen Shots from APPSNET Web-Based Database



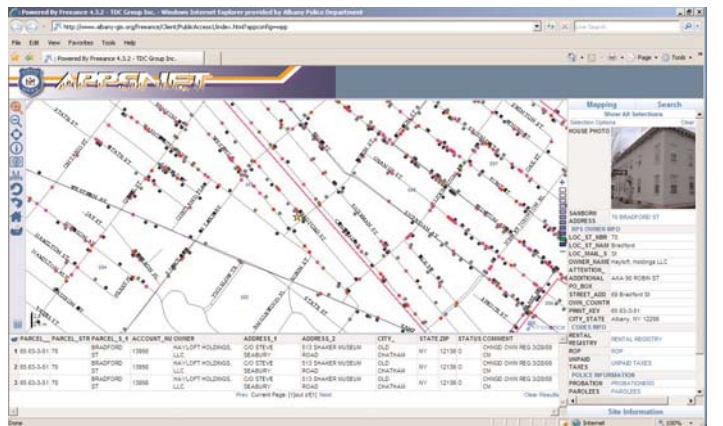
WEB APPLICATION AVAILABLE ON ALL MDT AND POLICE DEPARTMENT INTRANET



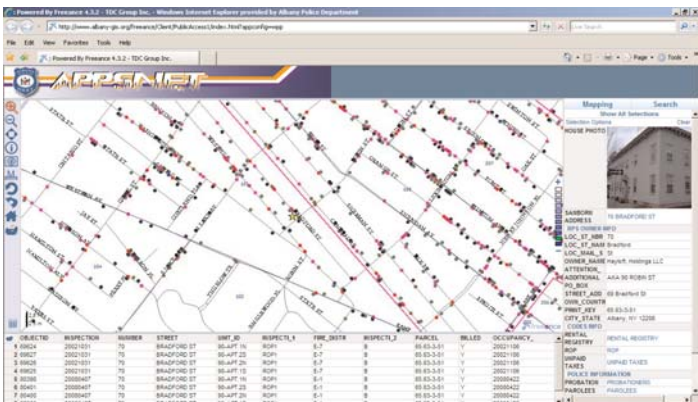
BUILDING ADDRESS QUERY



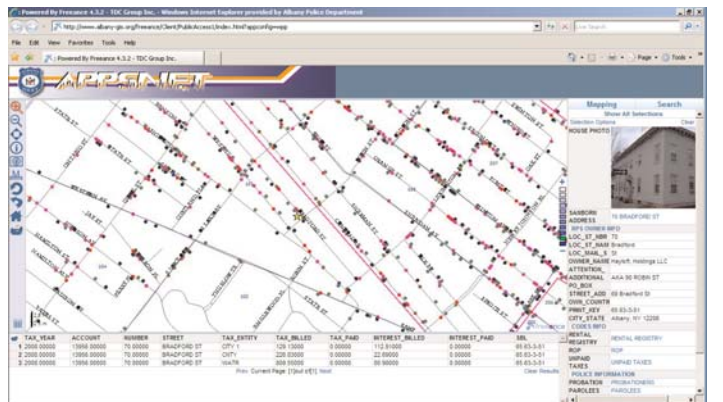
BUILDING ADDRESS QUERY- SPECIFIC ADDRESS
HOUSE PHOTO CURRENT PROPERTY OWNERSHIP UPDATED DAILY AND CURRENT HOUSE PHOTO



RENTAL REGISTRY UPDATED DAILY AND REFLECTED ON MAP



RESIDENTIAL OCCUPANCY PERMITS- UPDATED DAILY AND REFLECTED ON MAP



BACK TAXES UPDATED DAILY AND REFLECTED ON MAP

CITY OF ALBANY CERTIFICATE OF SPECIAL USE^{*}

Address:
123 Main Street

Special use permit issued for:
The operation of a take-out restaurant.

Conditions/Limitations:
The business shall close by 8:00 PM.
There shall be mandatory daily trash cleanup of the public area in front of the premise.
Any expansion or alteration of use shall require the applicant to reappear before the Board.

Approved Hours of Operation:
10:00 AM - 8:00 PM , Monday - Saturday

Issuance Date:
5/26/04

Expiration Date (if applicable):

**** This permit shall be posted and maintained by the applicant, or any successor thereto, in a manner visible to the public in accordance with the Code of the City of Albany, Section 375-27(D)2.***

Certificate contains fictional information as a sample



CITY OF ALBANY
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
DIVISION OF BUILDING & CODES
PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING
165 HENRY JOHNSON BLVD. – 1ST FLOOR
PHONE: (518) 434-5165
FAX: (518) 434-6015

VACANT BUILDING REGISTRATION FORM

(Please complete and return within thirty (30) days – Must be typed or legibly printed)

(See Reverse for Directions)

Sheet _____ of _____

Building Address _____
Owner of Record: _____
Owner's Address: _____
(please include zip) _____
Owner's Phone: () _____

Agent's Name: _____
Agent's Address: _____
(please include zip) _____
Agent's Phone: () _____

Contact Person: _____
Business Number: _____
Other Number: _____

Lienholder (1) Name: _____
Lienholder (1) Address: _____
(please include zip) _____
Lienholder (1) Phone: () _____

Lienholder (2) Name: _____
Lienholder (2) Address: _____
(please include zip) _____
Lienholder (2) Phone: () _____

Property Description _____

Vacant Building Plan: _____

Signed: _____ Title: _____
Name: _____ Company: _____
Date: _____

OFFICIAL USE ONLY

Date Rec'd _____

Amt. Encl. _____

Check No. _____

Reg. No. _____

City of Albany

Department of Fire, Emergency & Building Services

City Hall – Room 303; Albany, NY 12207

(518) 434-5995

Division of Building & Codes

Rental Dwelling Registry

(Must be completed by property owner)

Date _____

Address of Rental Property _____ Parcel No. _____

☐ Check here for change of address**Property Information/Building Description:**Number of stories (check one): ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ Other _____

Number of residential rental units in building _____

Physical location of units in building (number per floor): Base: _____ 1st _____ 2nd _____ 3rd _____ Other _____

Commercial usage or business in building: Floor _____ Type _____

Name of Previous Owner/ Date Purchase: _____**Individual Owner Information:**

Name(s) _____

Additional Name(s): _____

Legal Address of Owner(s) _____

City, State & Zip _____

Telephone Numbers:

Home _____ Work _____ Pager _____ Cell _____

Date(s) of birth: _____ mm/dd/yyyy

Corporation Owner/Partnership, etc.:

Name of Corporation/Partnership, etc. _____

Contact Person _____

Address _____

City, State & Zip _____ Phone _____

Designation of Agent (If the owner does not reside in Albany County or an adjacent county, a local agent must be designated that can be reached at all times and this form must be notarized if being mailed in to us. If submitting in person the form will be notarized here in the office for the owner only).

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City, State & Zip _____

Telephone Numbers:

Home _____ Work _____ Pager _____ Cell _____

Please use the back if more space is needed

OFFICIAL USE ONLY

Appl. # _____
 Fee _____
 Date _____
 Rec'd by _____
 Parcel # _____

City of Albany
 Division of Building & Codes
 Room 303 - City Hall
 24 Eagle Street
 Albany, NY 12207
 Phone (518) 434-5165
 Fax (518) 434-6015

**Application for Zoning and Building Permit**

Is Building Vacant? YES ☐ NO ☐ If vacant, is building currently registered? YES ☐ NO ☐
 Does building contain rental units? YES ☐ NO ☐ If yes, is it currently registered? YES ☐ NO ☐
 If building contains rental units, are all ROP's current? YES ☐ NO ☐ Mail Permit ☐ Pick-up Permit ☐

1. Address of Work: _____
2. Permit Applicant: _____
 Address: _____ Zip: _____
 Phone: () _____
3. Property Owner's Name: _____
 Address: _____ Zip: _____
 Phone: () _____
4. Architect or Engineer of Record: _____
 Address: _____ Zip: _____
 Phone: () _____
5. General Contractor/Construction Manager: _____
 Address: _____ Zip: _____
 Phone: () _____

General Construction Cost: \$ _____

6. Additional Contractors (where applicable) - * **Mechanical Contractors must be licensed in the City of Albany** *

Electrical: _____	Cost: \$ _____
Address: _____	Phone: () _____
Plumbing: _____	Cost: \$ _____
Address: _____	Phone: () _____
HVAC: _____	Cost: \$ _____
Address: _____	Phone: () _____
Sprinkler: _____	Cost: \$ _____
Address: _____	Phone: () _____
Elevator: _____	Cost: \$ _____
Address: _____	Phone: () _____
Other: _____	Cost: \$ _____
Address: _____	Phone: () _____

7. ☐ Commercial (4 or more units) ☐ Mixed ☐ Residential ☐ Single Family Project Cost Total: \$ _____

8. Proposed Work to Be Done: *Please describe in detail work to be done including the Prior/Current Use and if applicable the Proposed Use*

*** APPLICANT MUST SIGN APPLICATION & ANSWER QUESTIONS ON REVERSE ***

9. Sidewalk/Barricade Information – *all questions must be completed:*

Will Work Involve:

- | | | |
|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Blocking Sidewalk | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 2. Work Adjacent to Sidewalk | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 3. Storing of Materials on Public Right-of-Way | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 4. Opening Street or Sidewalk (If yes, a Separate Permit from Dept. of General Services is Required) | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |

If "yes" to any question, a separate Sidewalk/Barricade Application must be completed.

10. Other

- A. The applicant shall notify the office of any changes in the information contained in the application during the period for which the permit is in effect. A permit will be issued when the application has been determined to be complete and when the proposed work is determined to conform to the requirements of the Uniform Code. The authority conferred by such permit may be limited by conditions.
- B. A building permit may be suspended or revoked if it is determined that the work to which it pertains is not proceeding in conformance with the Uniform Code or with any condition attached to such permit, or if there has been a misrepresentation or falsification of a material fact in connection with the application for the permit.
- C. A building permit shall expire one year from the date of issuance or upon the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy (other than a temporary Certificate of Occupancy), whichever comes first. The permit may, upon written request, be renewed for successive one-year periods provided that (1) the permit has not been revoked or suspended at the time the application for renewal is made, (2) the relevant information in the application is up to date; and (3) the renewal fee is paid.
- D. All building permits are subject to Zoning/Planning Department approval for existing zoning conditions and ordinances.

11. CERTIFICATION:

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT I HAVE READ THE INSTRUCTIONS AND EXAMINED THIS APPLICATION AND KNOW THE SAME TO BE TRUE AND CORRECT. ALL PROVISIONS OF LAWS AND ORDINANCES COVERING THIS TYPE OF WORK WILL BE COMPLIED WITH WHETHER SPECIFIED HEREIN OR NOT AND I WILL ALSO ALLOW ALL INSPECTORS TO ENTER THE PREMISES FOR THE REQUIRED INSPECTIONS. THE GRANTING OF A PERMIT DOES NOT PRESUME TO GIVE AUTHORITY TO VIOLATE OR CANCEL THE PROVISIONS OF ANY OTHER STATE OR LOCAL LAW REGULATING CONSTRUCTION OR THE PERFORMANCE OF CONSTRUCTION AND/OR ZONING.

Owner/Authorized Agent: _____ Date: _____

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY			
Approvals Required <input type="checkbox"/> Electrical <input type="checkbox"/> Plumbing	Approved By _____ _____	Date _____ _____	
The following special conditions apply to this approval: <i>Planning/Zoning Department conditions and ordinances must be adhered to as a condition of this Permit.</i>			
Name _____		Date _____	
Title _____		Permit Number _____	

Frequently Asked Questions

How should I prepare for Block by Block in my zone?

Read over the City's residential code and check on potential compliance issues with your home or business. The City's code can be found online at the City's website www.albanyny.gov, or by requesting a copy from the Department of Buildings and Codes at 518-434-5165.

Create a list of code and quality of life issues in your neighborhood. Local knowledge and eyes on the street will help the Block by Block team as they address issues in your Zone. If something is a consistent problem, take note of it and be ready to share it with the Block by Block staff.

Talk with your neighbors about how to come together to enhance the Block by Block effort. You could agree to put flower planters on your front porch, host a neighborhood clean up or hold community meetings to discuss the quality of life in your neighborhood.

Are these new laws?

These laws are not new. Instead of relying on a complaint-driven system to identify issues, Block by Block proactively and systematically looks at all code issues in the zone, moving building by building and block by block. These codes and laws have been on the books for some time. Block by Block is stepped-up enforcement of the City's working code.

How do I report a code or quality of life issue in my neighborhood?

If you see something that is not quite right in the neighborhood, let your concern be known by calling Block by Block's official phone number **434-0123**. If you know the direct department that will be handling the issue, you can also contact that department directly. Each department's contact information can be found on the back of this report. All emergencies should be directed to 911.

When will Block by Block reach my neighborhood?

Block by Block is a new business practice for the City of Albany, which means it is an ongoing effort. While the initial sweep of Zone One was completed this fall, there will be continued efforts in the area. As one Zone is completed, the next one is started. All areas of the City will receive continued service as the Block by Block team conducts its sweep of the active zones. The projected timeline for completion of the four initial zones is fall of 2009.

How does this program affect vacant buildings?

Block by Block works in tandem with the City's Department of Neighborhood Revitalization. Block by Block inventories and cites abandoned properties, bringing them into vacant building court.

The Division of Neighborhood Revitalization assesses each building and determines a strategy for its stabilization and revitalization. Whether it's acquiring and land-banking a property for redevelopment, demolishing an unsafe structure, or turning the property over to a capable homeowner, the Division finds a way to bring the building back into productive use.

Think of Block by Block as making the buildings safe and the Division giving the property new life.

What's new?

From inter-departmental coordination to integrated database creation, this program is changing City business practices. Department heads meet every Monday morning to coordinate efforts and the Block by Block team meets weekly to work on assessing the active Zone.

In addition to the new collaboration model, the City is moving from separate databases housed within each department, to a centralized data system that can read each departments information simultaneously.

Is it effective?

One of the program's strongest features is the clear and measurable results it produces. As Block by Block continues, each zone's results will be compared to previous sweeps to ensure that neighborhoods are realizing results. Standardized reports will be produced on the program's findings, outlining violations cited and actions taken to help City staff and the community assess the progress of the program and the improvements made in the Zones.

By analyzing every property within the Zone, Block by Block staff are uncovering issues that were previously very hard to recognize and enforce. Because of this initiative, the City is able to correct problems like the 65 zoning violations, the 85 graffiti tags or the 366 missing Residential Occupancy Permits. These issues, while on their own may seem small, are collectively big issues for City neighborhoods. Correcting these problems will better the community's quality of life and provide a solid foundation for stable and vibrant neighborhoods.

What's next for Block by Block?

Block by Block is set to move into Zone Two. This Zone includes portions of the West Hill, Arbor Hill and Sheridan Hollow neighborhoods.

Prior to the start of Zone Two, Police Chief James Tuffey will hold an informational meeting at the Albany Community Development Agency on Henry Johnson Boulevard.

In the meantime, the Block by Block team is gathering information and doing background work on Zones Two, Three and Four.



Important Contact Information

Help from the City's residents is key to providing the best service possible to our community. Please call with questions, tips or suggestions; and always feel free to contact the City when you notice any issues that need to be addressed. In addition to the **Block by Block phone number 434-0123**, you will find the numbers of important contacts below. Your input is important to us, and we'd like to hear from you. Your eyes and ears are an important tool for our capable officers and employees in making our neighborhoods safe and enjoyable places to live.

Albany Police Department 438-4000
non-emergency public safety issues

Department of General Services 434-CITY (2489)
trash, vacant lots, snow removal, sidewalk/street repair, streetlight outages, graffiti, tree-trimming

Division of Buildings & Codes 434-5165
vacant building registry, vacant building boarding, residential occupancy permits, building inspections, hours of operation, zoning violations, rental registry

Department of Water & Water Supply 434-5300
water, sewer, call before you dig

Department of Fire & Emergency Services 438-4000
hydrant problems, non-emergency issues

Albany Community Development Agency 434-5240
CDBG funding, grant programs, rehabilitation assistance, Albany HomeStore, Division of Neighborhood Revitalization

Department of Development & Planning 434-2532
Board of Zoning Appeals, Planning Board, Historic Resource Commission, Albany Local Development Corporation, neighborhood planning, comprehensive plan, Empire Zone

All Emergencies 911

Albany Housing Authority 641-7500
Section 8 vouchers, Housing Authority properties

New York State Attorney General's Office 771-7755
Nowhere to Hide Program

Albany County District Attorney's Office 487-5460
Safe Homes – Safe Streets Initiative, Landlord Training, the Trespass Affidavit Program (No Trespassing signs), Narcotics Eviction

Affordable Housing Partnership 434-1730
landlord training programs, residential rehabilitation training programs, credit workshops, homebuyer assistance

Find other contact numbers & important information at:

www.albanyny.gov